

2 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S HISTORY

its value as an authority. Some of its defects are the inevitable result of time. Since its composition new documents have come to light which invalidate some of his conclusions and disprove some of his statements of fact. No history that is written can escape this fate. It will be a part of my business to point out what these new authorities are, and to show how they affect the present value of his narrative.

There are other defects which are not due to the insensible action of time, but were present in Macaulay's History from the beginning. There are some books and some sources of information, accessible when he wrote, which he omitted to consult, and these too want pointing out. There were some sides of the period, and some episodes in the story, which, for one reason or another, he omitted, so that his story was incomplete, and attention will be called to these. Finally there are some serious errors, caused not by defects of knowledge on the part of the writer, but by defects of character, or intellectual defects. The narrowness of view, the partiality, and the prejudice, which mar large portions of Macaulay's History, seriously diminish its permanent value as an account of a period of English history. These faults are most marked in his treatment of certain persons, and cer-

tain classes, and they have led to a number of
controversies
on which every critic of Macaulay has to
pronounce judge-
ment and every student of Macaulay has
to form an
opinion.

Yet even those contemporary critics who
were most
biassed against the party for whom Macaulay
held a brief,
and most hostile to Macaulay personally,
admitted at once
the greatness of the History as a literary
achievement.
Lockhart, the editor of the Quarterly,
wrote to J. W.